

41-08-02.wpd --Let Jesus Open Your Eyes
 blindness, epiphany, healing, touch, vision, guidance, witness
 Mark 8:22-25
 The deeper our blindness the more we need Christ's healing touch.

INTRODUCTION:

--Helen Keller, "My darkness has been filled with the light of intelligence, and behold, the outer day-lit world was stumbling and groping in social blindness."

The ability to see is a marvelous gift. It enables us to navigate where we are going, to recognize objects at a distance, and to appreciate the beauties of form and design in creation and art. We could talk all day about how eyesight helps us live in this world. But its many blessings only highlight the hardships that result from its loss. Blindness is a very difficult challenge. It's a tragedy for humans. But what Helen Keller observed about another kind of blindness is even more tragic: **people with clear eyesight while morally blind.**

--Jesus came healing the sick and preaching God's Kingdom. Physical blindness was one of the things He healed, but He was not always able to open the eyes of the spiritually blind. Moral blindness is deeper, and really, more debilitating than physical blindness. And **HOM.idea.**

--The following story about physical blindness helps us see how spiritual blindness can be healed....-- Mark 8:22-26, They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. This man's eyes were physically opened, but I want to show how the process of his healing illustrates our need to **let Jesus open our eyes of our spiritual understanding.**

I. Freedom from Blindness Is a Personal Need

- A. "some people" brought him to Jesus, but Jesus removed him from the people ("He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village.")
- B. We don't know who these "some people" were, but they recognized a need and they were right to bring the problem to Christ.
- C. BUT, Jesus recognized something else: For this man's eyes to get opened, it had to be a private experience, not public. (We can see when something's wrong, but we can't always see how what's

wrong is to be set straight. We come at problems with previous experience, we trust in tried and true methods of solving them, we think we know how the job is to be done: these people "begged Jesus to touch him." Jesus removed him from them.)

TRANS: Just as with other problems in life, sometimes we must "let go and let God" with people. It's enough that we bring them to Jesus in prayer, but when we try telling Him what He must do with them, He removes them from our influence. What they must learn, He has to show them, personally. Their blindness is personal, and they need the personal enlightenment that Jesus specifically has for them.

II. God's Dealing with People is Personal

- A. Jesus did not just "touch him," which is what all the people thought he needed. First, Jesus "spit on the man's eyes," and only after that did He "put his hands on him."
- B. If "God has a wonderful plan for your life," as the common saying goes, then "He has a unique pathway to get us there."
 1. Even those who love us may not know the sequence of steps we must go through for our eyes to be opened to spiritual reality.
 2. "But how can spit heal blindness?" It didn't, but Jesus, led by the Spirit, used it in the process for a special meaning or message:
 - a. Perhaps he had been spit upon in mockery by uncaring people. Christ's holy use of saliva might be intended to help heal any resentment that accompanied his history of blindness.
 - b. Perhaps he had begged for alms for a living and was looking only to money to sustain him. Since saliva is the most physical substance coming from the mouth, maybe Jesus was reminding him "that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes **from the mouth of the LORD.**" (Deu 8:3b)
- C. God's way with us in opening our eyes is interactive,
 1. After the first touch, "Jesus asked, 'Do you see anything?'" (God asks us questions, not because He needs to know, but because we do. When Adam and Eve sinned, God asked 3 questions: 1) "Where are you?" 2) "Who told you that you were naked?" and 3) "Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" God already knew the answers, but He wanted them to think over their actions and to see the truth themselves.)
 2. God deals with us as individuals, using our feedback and making

His next move based on our responses to Him (in this case, this man's incomplete healing required a **second touch** of God's grace, so "*Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes*").

3. God has **no set pattern** for *opening our eyes*. His work with us is as varied as people are diverse. Some get a *dazzling epiphany* and the job's done, but most of us are like this blind man, and we are transformed by a series of God's gracious interventions.

TRANS: The deeper our blindness the more we need Christ's healing touch, and the deeper the need, the more *personal* and *intimate* that touch. God knows us perfectly. He gives special attention to our personal *blind spots* to help us see things as they really are. And finally,

III. An Epiphany is a Personal Testimony

- A. The word epiphany means manifestation [Epiphany Season celebrates the *manifestation* of God's Son to the world], but the popular meaning is that of an *enlightenment*. Enlightenments are always personal.
- B. What was this man's personal testimony? (v.25b)
 1. "*his eyes were opened*"-- In our case, many times, the eyes of our mind and heart need to be opened.
 2. "*his sight was restored*"-- He wasn't born blind (we know that he had seen *trees*). Many times, the things we knew in Sunday School as children, and thought we outgrew, is what needs to be restored.
 3. "*he saw everything clearly*"-- BUT what he saw first was Jesus. When we need our eyes opened, it is usually because we are not seeing Jesus clearly in the first place. When our eyes are fixed on "the Author and Finisher of our faith", we see *everything clearly*.

CONCLUSION:

--**The deeper our blindness the more we need Christ's healing touch**. There's a contemporary praise song that is also a prayer: Open the eyes of my heart, Lord / Open the eyes of my heart / I want to see You / I want to see You / To see you high and lifted up / Shining in the light of Your glory / Pour out Your power and love / As we sing holy, holy, holy / holy, holy, holy / holy, holy, holy / holy, holy, holy / I want to see You. Let's make this our prayer, not only during Epiphany Season, but all the rest of our earthly journey.

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